

Urban social space and the development of public dance hall culture in Vienna, 1780–1814

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ABSTRACT: This article seeks to understand how the emergence of public dance hall culture affected the consumption of dance music among different social classes in Vienna between the years 1780 and 1814, when the number of dance halls more than tripled. Using mainly contemporary eyewitness accounts as sources, this article argues that social distinctions, rather than disappearing, were reinforced after the commercialization of the Viennese dance halls. As turn-of-the-century Vienna was a major city with a heterogeneous population, the diversity of social classes was reflected in its ballroom culture. This is because the Viennese elite, the nobility and the higher bourgeoisie, was very reluctant to share social space with the lower classes. Although to some degree the amount of social space expanded in the city at the time, the use of the space, however, remained socially diverse.

Introduction

Thanks to its famous waltz composers and rich dance hall tradition, nineteenth-century Vienna was known as the city of dance. Therefore, it should come as no surprise that the Viennese Biedermeier period, together with the later era of ‘the waltz king’ Johann Strauss the younger, have attracted the interest of many music historians. These have depicted nineteenth-century Vienna as a carefree city, with tens of thousands of people dancing in the numerous dance halls, but where dance culture was, at the same time, socially very segregated. While the nobility danced in palaces and salons, the middle- and lower-class people went dancing to public dance halls located in the suburbs.¹

¹ A.M. Hanson, *Musical Life in Biedermeier Vienna* (London, 1985), 163–9; G. Liesenfeld, ‘Vom “Ball in der Krautkammer” und von Öffentlichen Lustbarkeiten für ein “Minderes Publikum”’, in W. Greif (ed.), *Volkskultur im Wiener Vormärz: das andere Wien zur Biedermeierzeit* (Vienna, 1998), 31–42. See also H.E. Jacob, *Johann Strauss, Father and Son: A Century of Light Music* (New York, 1939); H. Jäger-Sunstenau, *Johann Strauss, der Walzerkönig und seine Dynastie: Familiengeschichte, Urkunden* (Vienna, 1965); D.B. Scott, *Sounds of the Metropolis: The Nineteenth-Century Popular Music Revolution in London, New York, Paris, and Vienna* (New York, 2008); J. Wechsberg, *The Waltz Emperors: The Life and Times and Music of the Strauss Family* (New York, 1973).

While the dance culture of Biedermeier Vienna has attracted the interest of numerous scholars, relatively little is known about the earlier dance history of the city of dance. Although Johann Strauss the elder and Joseph Lanner came into the picture only in the 1820s, Viennese dance hall culture actually developed rather earlier. In fact, a major shift had already taken place in the late eighteenth century, when, for the first time, public dance halls were opened for everyone. During the thirty-year period, from 1780 to 1810, the number of Viennese dance halls increased rapidly from 15 to 50. This can be considered as a turning point in Viennese urban music culture; not only because the phenomenon represented the early commercialization of Viennese dance culture, because now many restrictions on dance hall business were abolished and innkeepers hurried to open ballrooms for growing public, but also because it established the basis for Vienna's later reputation as the city of the waltz, as some of the dance halls, made popular by Lanner and the Strauss family, had already been founded during this period.²

Moreover, some dance historians, such as Reingard Witzmann, have even stated that the early dance halls in Vienna played a crucial role in the development of the Viennese waltz, as the dance style did not develop in the dance schools or ballrooms of the elite, but in numerous late eighteenth-century public dance halls, attended by all social orders of Vienna.³ This view has been echoed in more recent histories, where it seems to be the commonly accepted view that the lack of snobbish hierarchy in Viennese dance culture enabled the Viennese waltz to become one of the first popular social dance forms in the early nineteenth century.⁴

A closer look should be taken at the early developments of the Viennese dance hall culture, however, because although the early dance hall culture formed the basis of the city's later reputation as the city of dance, the assumption that it was democratic is contradicted by the historical evidence that indicates that dance culture in nineteenth-century Vienna was, in fact, socially segregated.

Based on contemporary eyewitness accounts⁵ and advertisements for the Viennese ballrooms, this article argues that social distinctions, rather

² Jacob, *Johann Strauss*, 33–5; J.J.S. Korhonen, 'Social choreography of the Viennese waltz: the transfer and reception of the dance in Vienna and Europe, 1780–1825', unpublished European University Institute Ph.D. thesis, 2011, 33–71; F.M. Scherer, *Quarter Notes and Bank Notes: The Economics of Music Composition in the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries* (Princeton, 2004), 47–8; Scott, *Sounds of the Metropolis*, 5, 44–5, 118.

³ R. Witzmann, *Ländler in Wien. Ein Beitrag zur Entwicklungsgeschichte des Wiener Walzers bis in die Zeit des Wiener Kongresses* (Vienna, 1976), 80–1.

⁴ See for example D. Carew, 'The consumption of music', in J. Samson (ed.), *Cambridge History of Nineteenth-Century Music* (Cambridge, 2004), 252–3.

⁵ One problem with the written sources of these kinds is, of course, that the majority of the writers represented the elite. Viennese writers such as Johann Pezzl and Joachim Perinet belonged to the group of the Viennese educated bourgeoisie, while the count Khevenhüller-Metsch was a member of the aristocracy. Travellers Johann Peter Willebrand and Johann Friedrich Reichardt, who depicted the Viennese dance culture in their travel writings,

than disappearing, were reinforced after the commercialization of the ballroom culture at the end of the eighteenth century. Indeed, the sources relating to more than 15 Viennese dance halls reveal that during the period under research, 1780–1814, the Viennese elite was very reluctant to share the social space with the *petit bourgeoisie*, let alone the lower classes. Thus, it will be argued that the emergence of public dance hall culture did not create a democratic social space. Rather, new ways of showing class distinctions were created during this period when dancing began to be consumed by almost all social classes in Vienna.⁶

Since the focus of the article is on social differentiation in a commerce-based culture, Pierre Bourdieu's ideas on taste form the theoretical background of this study. Bourdieu argues that consumption is one of the most important ways through which social differences are expressed in modern society. Moreover, given that consumption is not only a matter of demand, the production of cultural goods should also be taken into account. According to Bourdieu, the form in which taste is manifested is also dependent upon the 'system' of goods that are on offer.⁷ This was the case in Vienna too. As this article will show, social differentiation in the Viennese dance culture was not only a matter of choice, but it depended also on the supply side of the dance culture, that of the dance hall business.

Ballrooms for all classes

Although the very first public dance houses can be dated back to the Middle Ages, the ballroom did not become a central institution in European urban culture before the eighteenth century. While new dance halls were built in many cities during the century, balls were also arranged in inns, opera houses or private homes. In addition, during summer time the urban middle class was to be found dancing in parks as well as in spas and

represented the higher bourgeoisie. Despite the fact that one can find hardly any sources written by people from the lower classes, something about the dance culture of the workers and servants can be said as well, because in many cases the writers of higher social status also wrote about the dance culture of the Viennese suburban dance places, which were visited by members of the middle and lower class.

⁶ This phenomenon can be compared to the development of Viennese music culture, which has been studied in greater depth. It has been pointed out that despite the fact that a public concert culture emerged in Vienna for the first time at the end of the century, it did not, in fact, democratize Viennese concert culture. Once the bourgeoisie started to visit public concerts, the Viennese nobility went to private venues, where the bourgeoisie was not welcomed. Correspondingly, despite the fact that both the Viennese elite and lower classes visited the Viennese public theatres at the time, social distinctions were created among the theatre audience. While the nobility and rich bourgeoisie enjoyed the concerts from their private boxes, the pit was occupied by lower classes. See for example D. Heartz, *Haydn, Mozart and the Viennese School 1740–1780* (New York and London, 1995), 23–45; T. DeNora, 'Patronage and social change in Beethoven's Vienna', *American Journal of Sociology*, 97 (1991), 310–36.

⁷ P. Bourdieu, *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgment of Taste*, trans. Richard Nice (London, 1986; orig. publ. 1979), 231.

health resorts.⁸ While English dances, quadrilles, minuets and allemandes dominated European dance floors during the first half of the eighteenth century, their dominance was challenged by waltz-like pair dances during the second half of the century.⁹

Despite the fact that from the early eighteenth century on dancing at public dance venues became an increasingly popular leisure activity in almost every social layer in Europe, the rift between the dance halls of the urban elite and those of the lower classes anything but vanished during the period. Even in public outdoor dance places, such as pleasure gardens, social mingling seems to have been just an illusion. For instance, although the aristocracy and middle class were occasionally seen promenading and dancing together in the pleasure gardens of Paris, distinctions still occurred and many contemporaries regarded these parks as political illusion. This was partly because the parks were closely related to other cultural initiatives undertaken by the French crown in order to encourage patriotism and improve its own image.¹⁰

Neither could pleasure gardens democratize the dance culture of London, where the gardens were also visited by both the aristocracy and middling ranks. This was the case especially in Vauxhall, the most well-known garden in the suburban city. While the cheap entrance fee of the garden attracted even the lower-middle ranks, from the point of view of the aristocracy the place was ideal for auto-voyerism, the practice of seeing others and being seen by them. But again, in order to keep the distance in the shared social space of Vauxhall, the English aristocracy made sure that it did not take part in the vulgarities practised by some members of the lower ranks. Although the aristocracy continued visiting the public gardens until the early nineteenth century, at the same time it arranged private balls, where entrance was, however, restricted to the respectable aristocracy and the highest bourgeoisie.¹¹

From the late eighteenth century on, private assembly balls became increasingly popular among the London elite. Unlike public parks, assemblies provided a degree of protected equality and respectability. Therefore, they were considered as a more respectable option for marriageable women and unmarried men.¹² Besides offering opportunities

⁸ M. Fink, *Der Ball: eine Kulturgeschichte des Gesellschaftstanzes im 18. und 19. Jahrhundert* (Lucca, 1996), 21–33.

⁹ E. and K.-H. Lange, *Modetänze um 1800 in Becker's Taschenbüchern 1791–1827: und ihr Einfluss auf die Volkstanzpraxis des 19. und 20. Jahrhunderts in Niederdeutschland* (Berlin, 1984), 16–18.

¹⁰ J. Conlin, 'Vauxhall on the boulevard: pleasure gardens in London and Paris, 1764–1784', *Urban History*, 35 (2008), 25–47.

¹¹ J. Conlin, 'Vauxhall revisited: the afterlife of a London pleasure garden, 1770–1859', *Journal of British Studies*, 45 (2006), 718–20.

¹² P. Langford, *A Polite and Commercial People: England, 1727–1783* (Oxford, 1992), 110; M. Knoweles, *The Wicked Waltz and Other Scandalous Dances: Outrage at Couple Dancing in the Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Centuries* (Jefferson, 2009), 194; J. Rendell, 'Almack's assembly rooms: a site of sexual pleasure', *Journal of Architectural Education*, 55 (2002), 136–49.

to meet and arrange marriages between noble families, assemblies protected the aristocracy from the enriched middle ranks. Especially during the two first decades of the nineteenth century, London aristocrats sought to make fashionable circles distinct and impervious to undesirable newcomers not only by formalizing and codifying proper behaviour according to rigid rules of etiquette but also by transferring the locus of sociability from public arenas to private assembly balls and homes.¹³

In Vienna, too, the dance culture of the city reflected the diversity of Viennese social structure. While the cultural life of the highest elite was centred at the court and other inner-city aristocratic venues, the lower classes, in contrast, celebrated at public inns in suburban Vienna, where they lived. This was also the case for the Viennese dance hall culture, which was still only emerging at the century's end.

Despite the political and economic setbacks that followed the Napoleonic wars,¹⁴ in terms of culture, Vienna was still one of the richest cities in Europe. Therefore, the capital city of the Habsburg monarchy attracted many tourists and other visitors, who commented on the Viennese cultural life in their journals and travel writings. Of course, as dancing was an important part of the Viennese celebration culture, the ballrooms of the city were also commented on by many travellers, whose accounts reveal, among other things, just how diverse the Viennese dance culture actually was.

In 1783, a traveller called Carl Anton noticed that 'In all kinds of ballrooms for all orders, people gathered at every end and corner of the city and suburbs.'¹⁵ Another traveller, Joachim Christoph Friedrich Schulz, who visited Vienna in the following decade, stated that in Vienna different social classes danced in different places. According to him, the higher society danced in the court and at private balls, while the rich middle class were to be found dancing at the casinos, spas and picnics, while the lower bourgeoisie danced in *Lustörten* outside the city and in the city. During Viennese carnival time (*Fasching*) the lower classes celebrated in

¹³ M. Morgan, *Manners, Morals, and Class in England, 1774–1858* (New York, 1994), 28–9. See also J. Hall-Witt, *Fashionable Acts: Opera and Elite Culture in London, 1780–1880* (Durham, NH, 2007), 120–3.

¹⁴ As consequences of a series of unsuccessful wars against France during the years between 1792 and 1809, the monarchy lost many of its areas pro tempore, the Holy Roman Empire disintegrated and Vienna was occupied twice. Finally, after the prolonged and expensive war against France, the state went bankrupt in 1811. See B.M. Buchmann, 'Politik und Verwaltung', in P. Csendes and F. Oppl (eds.), *Wien: Geschichte einer Stadt, Band 3: Von 1790 bis zur Gegenwart* (Vienna, Cologne and Weimar, 2006), 91–7; C. Ingrao, *The Habsburg Monarchy, 1618–1815* (Cambridge and New York, 1994), 168–92; E. Wangermann, 'The Austrian Enlightenment and the French Revolution', in K. Brauer and W.E. Wright (eds.), *Austria in the Age of the French Revolution 1789–1815* (Minneapolis, 1990), 7.

¹⁵ 'Tanzsäle von allen Arten, und für alle Gattungen von Menschen trifft man an allen Enden und Ecken der Stadt und der Vorstädte an.', in E. Grünthal (ed.), *Wöchentliche Wahrheiten für und über die Herren in Wien. Bearbeitet von einer Gesellschaft belesener Frauenzimmer* (Vienna and Prague, 1783), 25.

the Redoute Hall together with the nobility and other members of the elite; the latter, however, only watched while the lower classes danced.¹⁶

The variant dancing practices among the different social classes are easy to understand against the background of the social structure of the city. As Vienna was the capital city of the monarchy, the aristocratic elite had dominated there for quite some time. However, the role of Vienna as a rising metropolis of trade and production gave birth, little by little, to a bourgeois class.¹⁷ As the businessmen and lawyers of Vienna formed an upper bourgeois class in the late eighteenth century, the size of the *petit bourgeoisie* (*klein Bürgerstand*) grew rapidly due to pre-industrialization.¹⁸ Nevertheless, at the time there was still a large group of artisans that cannot be seen as belonging to the bourgeoisie. It has been estimated that approximately one third of all the inhabitants of Vienna were engaged in crafts or trades, either as workers or as their family members.¹⁹ A fairly homogeneous group of artisans lived mainly in the suburbs, where they had their workshops and shops.²⁰ In addition, there was an exceptional number of domestic servants in Vienna. It has been estimated that as much as 15 per cent of the population was in service. Servants, together with the workers and journeymen, were at the bottom of Viennese society.²¹ Characteristically, while the annual incomes of the higher bourgeoisie could have been as much as 2,000 Florin,²² workers earned c. 100 and servants only 20 Gulden per year.²³

For a long time, the dancing of the lower classes was controlled in Vienna. This was because it was thought that public gatherings could contribute to the spreading of infectious diseases as well as create public disturbances

¹⁶ J.C.F. Schulz, *Reise eines Liefländers von Riga nach Warschau, durch Südpreußen, über Breslau, Dresden, Karlsbad, Bayreuth, Nürnberg, Regensburg, München, Salzburg, Linz, Wien und Klagenfurt, nach Boßen in Tyrol*, vol. V (Berlin, 1795), 218.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 25–6.

¹⁸ E. Bruckmüller, 'Herkunft und Selbstverständnis bürgerlicher Gruppierungen in der Habsburgermonarchie. Eine Einführung', in E. Bruckmüller, U. Döcker, H. Stekl and P. Urbanitsch (eds.), *Bürgertum in der Habsburgermonarchie* (Vienna and Cologne, 1990), 14–15; I. Mittenzwei, 'Zwischen Vergangenheit und Zukunft. Der Wirtschaftsbürger am Ende des 18. Jahrhunderts', in G. Barth-Scalmani, B. Mazohl-Wallnig and E. Wangermann (eds.), *Genie und Alltag. Bürgerliche Stadtkultur zur Mozartzeit* (Salzburg and Vienna, 1994), 212–13.

¹⁹ Guilds and the apprenticeship system, directed and protected by the state, remained an important part of the economy until the mid-nineteenth century. See A. Steidl, 'Silk weaver and purse maker apprentices in eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Vienna', in B. De Munck, S.L. Kaplan and H. Soly (eds.), *Learning on the Shop Floor. Historical Perspectives on Apprenticeship* (New York and Oxford, 2007), 133–5.

²⁰ B.M. Buchmann, 'Demographie und Gesellschaft', in Csendes and Opll (eds.), *Wien*, 28–33; Bruckmüller, 'Herkunft und Selbstverständnis bürgerlicher Gruppierungen in der Habsburgermonarchie', 13–18.

²¹ Buchmann, 'Demographie und Gesellschaft', 34.

²² The four main coin values in Vienna were Kreuzer, Gulden or Florin, Thaler and Ducat. The Thaler equalled 2 Gulden, and 1 Gulden equalled 60 Kreuzer. See M.S. Morrow, *Concert Life in Haydn's Vienna: Aspects of a Developing Musical and Social Institution* (Stuyvesant, 1989), 115–17.

²³ *Ibid.*, 112.

among suburban people.²⁴ In the late eighteenth century, however, many of the regulations were cancelled. In 1766, Empress Maria Theresa decreed that public balls were permitted to be organized in the city.²⁵ Until 1786, dance places were allowed to remain open until midnight on Sundays and holidays, by which time a decree was passed allowing inns to remain open until three o'clock or the whole night, albeit in that case without dance music.²⁶ According to Reingard Witzmann, the ballroom reform of 1786 revolutionized the Viennese ballroom culture, because it was after this that innkeepers started to compete for customers. As visitors were allowed to spend the whole night in inns, innkeepers started to invest in decoration and food. In addition, many Viennese inns now began to be converted into ballrooms. The former inns Zur Goldenen Birn and Zum Schwarzen Bock are just two examples. Zur Goldenen Birn in Landstraße No. 63 became popular between 1812 and 1822, when Michael Pamer worked there as a conductor. In the 1820s, Pamer's pupils Joseph Lanner and Johann Strauss were to be found playing in Zum Schwarzen Bock, the inn originally founded already at the beginning of the eighteenth century.²⁷

In 1780, a contemporary Viennese chronicler, Christian Löper, estimated that there were 17 dance halls inside the city walls of Vienna and 4 outside.²⁸ By the time of the Congress of Vienna (1814–15), almost 50 public ballrooms had been opened, mostly in the suburban city. Figure 1 shows the 16 ballrooms discussed in most detail in this article. As one can see, nearly all of the oldest ballrooms were situated inside the fortifications, while the new ballrooms were generally founded in the suburbs. This is unlikely to have been a coincidence, since in contrast to the densely built inner city, the suburban Vienna expanded and changed constantly during the early nineteenth century.

At the turn of the century, Vienna consisted of three areas: the old town, the suburbs and the areas outside the glacis (*Linnienwall*; in the map the outer fortification line). The old town was a densely built city centre, which remained static from the late eighteenth century until the mid-nineteenth century, when the *Ringstraße* was built. At the turn of the century, c. 52,000–54,000 people lived there inside the inner fortification line, which separated the old town and suburbs. It has been estimated that in the late eighteenth century the majority of the population, c. 60 per cent, lived in the suburbs,

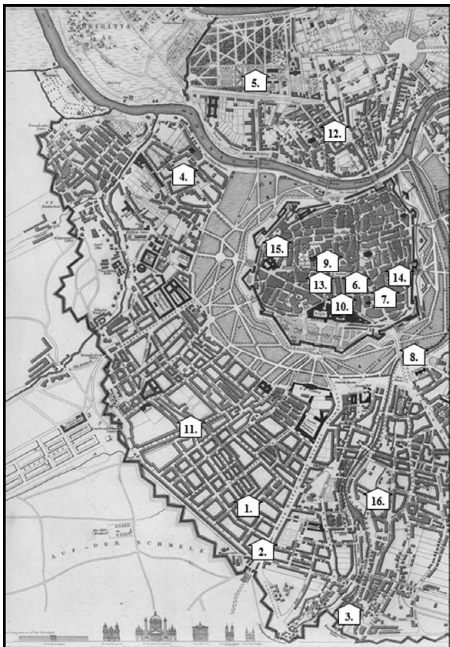
²⁴ J. Ehmer, *Familienstruktur und Arbeitsorganisation im Frühindustriellen Wien* (Munich, 1980), 59–61; M. Scheutz, 'Fasching am frühneuzeitlichen Wiener Hof. Zur Domestizierung der "verkehrten Welt" in einem höfischen Umfeld', in M. Scheutz and V. Valeš (eds.), *Wien und seine Wienerinnen: ein historischer Streifzug durch Wien über die Jahrhunderte: Festschrift für Karl Vocelka zum 60. Geburtstag* (Vienna, 2008), 132–6.

²⁵ C. Fauller, *Gesetze, Verordnungen und Vorschriften für die Polizei-Verwaltung im Kaiserthume Oesterreich in den Jahren 1740 bis Ende 1825, und in alphabetischchronologischer Ordnung zusammengestellt. 1. Band* (Vienna, 1827), 369.

²⁶ Witzmann, *Ländler in Wien*, 8–9.

²⁷ *Ibid.*

²⁸ C. Löper, *Der kaiser-königlichen Residenzstadt Wien Kommerzielschema* (Vienna, 1780), 37–8.



| | Name | Location | Opened [or first time quoted in] | Source |
|----|-----------------------|--|----------------------------------|----------|
| 1 | Apollo Hall | Schottenfeld, Zieglergasse Nro. 15. | 10.1. 1808 | Witzmann |
| 2 | Bey 2 Lampeln | Grünen Mariahilferstrasse Nro. 251 | 1783 | Witzmann |
| 3 | Goldenen Einhorn | Freygut Hundthum an der Linienhauptstrasse | 1783 | i |
| 4 | Grüne Tor | Rossau | [1783] | Pemmer |
| 5 | Jahn's restaurant | Augarten | 1780s | Pemmer |
| 6 | Klubb | Spiegelgasse Nr. 1368 | [1791] | ii |
| 7 | Mehlgrube | Mehlmarkt | 1726 | Witzmann |
| 8 | Mondschein | Kärtnerort, Mondschein-Haus Nr. 102 | 1773 | Witzmann |
| 9 | Ottos Kasino | von Trattnerischen Freyhof auf dem Graben | [1784] | iii |
| 10 | Redoute hall | Hofburg | 1747-1748 | Witzmann |
| 11 | Schaf | Schottenfeld | | Pemmer |
| 12 | Sperl | Leopoldstadt | Re-opened 29.9. 1807 | Witzmann |
| 13 | Traiteur zum Strochen | Kohlmarkt | | Witzmann |
| 14 | Traiteurs Jahn | Himmelpfortgasse | 1788 | Witzmann |
| 15 | Zum Römischen Kaiser | Renngasse 1 | 1808 | Witzmann |
| 16 | Zum Schwarzen Bock | Neuen Wieden, Margaretenstrasse Nro. 27 | early 18th century | Pemmer |

Figure 1: 16 Viennese dance halls, 1780–1814

Source: Based on the city plan drawn by W.B. Clarke and engraved by J. Henshall: *Vienna. Wien. Published under the Superintendence of the Society for the Diffusion of Useful Knowledge* (London, 1844); information from H. Pemmer, *Alt-Wiener Gast- und Vergnügungsstätten*; Witzmann, *Ländler in Wien*, except (i) *Wiener Zeitung*, 27 Dec. 1783; (ii) *Wiener Zeitung*, 1 Jan. 1791, 13; (iii) *Das Wienerblättchen*, 17 Aug. 1784, 158.

20 per cent lived in the old town and 15 per cent lived outside the city wall.²⁹ Since the inhabitants of the city centre were mostly the Viennese nobility and higher bourgeoisie, the first inner-city dance halls were aimed at them. Suburban dance places, for their part, were originally above all venues for the *petit bourgeoisie*, craftsmen and servants. In the early nineteenth century, however, the situation began to change, as the suburban ballrooms started to attract the nobility as well.

Late eighteenth century: from high to low grade

In 1794, according to a Viennese chronicler, Ignaz de Luca, the Viennese nobility danced in the Redoute Hall and Traiteurs Jahn, ballrooms situated in the inner city.³⁰ Until the eighteenth century, the Redoute Hall was the

²⁹ Buchmann, 'Demographie und Gesellschaft', 39–40.

³⁰ I. De Luca, *Topographie von Wien* (Vienna, 1794), 384.

most luxurious Viennese ballroom, home to celebrations of the Viennese nobility and higher bourgeoisie. The original hall in the *Hofburg* was built during the period of 1747–48, after which it was remodelled many times. The hall consisted of two ballrooms, the *kleine Saal* and the *große Saal*, both of which were, at the turn of the century, luxurious and decorated with many chandeliers.³¹

Although the Redoute Hall was initially open to all on payment of an entrance fee, in 1752 admission was restricted to the nobility and the military, because of complaints from the nobility.³² According to the ball order of 3 January 1752, only masked balls could be held in the hall, and only the high nobility, knighthood and state and military officers were allowed to dance.³³ Characteristically, a traveller, Peter Willebrand, who visited the hall in 1769, described how the ballroom offered a good opportunity to meet persons of the highest order.³⁴ However, the 1752 regulation was cancelled in 1772, and from then on, other classes, too, could participate in carnival balls held annually in the Redoute Hall. By the late eighteenth century, the Redoute Hall had become the focal point of the Viennese carnival celebrations, which lasted from early January to the end of February.³⁵ Since the Middle Ages, the Viennese elite had arranged carnival balls, where the world seemed to be turned upside down as the nobles masked themselves as German peasants.³⁶ Despite this, however, social distinctions still mattered. Unlike early modern Italy and nineteenth-century Paris, where the roles of masters and subjects could change during carnival celebrations,³⁷ in Vienna the higher and lower classes were not seen celebrating together at the carnival balls. Although the lower classes also attended the carnival at the Redoute, the elite did not, in fact, dance with them.³⁸

³¹ See for example J.P. Willebrand, *Des Herrn Johann Peter Willebrand historische Berichte und Praktische Anmerkungen auf Reisen in Deutschland und andern Ländern* (Leipzig, 1796), 313–14.

³² Heartz, *Haydn, Mozart and the Viennese School 1740–1780*, 65.

³³ M. Fink, 'Tanzstätten und Tanzveranstaltungen und Bälle', in W. Salmen (ed.), *Mozart in der Tanzkultur seiner Zeit* (Innsbruck, 1990), 40–2.

³⁴ Willebrand, *Des Herrn Johann Peter Willebrand historische Berichte und Praktische Anmerkungen auf Reisen in Deutschland und andern Ländern*, 113–14.

³⁵ Although the carnival season was the most active period in terms of dancing, balls were, in any case, organized monthly in Vienna. See Hanson, *Musical Life in Biedermeier Vienna*, 152–3.

³⁶ One should bear in mind that at the time court balls were above all representational occasions, in which the order of the world and the power of the emperor were represented. Thus, peasant masks in the carnival balls were used to symbolize the multiculturalism of the wide Habsburg monarchy. See P. Nettle, 'The birth of the waltz', *Dance Index (Ballet Caravan)*, 5 (1946), 208–28.

³⁷ See for example P. Burke, *Popular Culture in Early Modern Europe* (revised edn, Aldershot, 1994), 178–91.

³⁸ This phenomenon can be compared to eighteenth-century Venice, where, according to J.H. Johnson, the existing social order and distinctions between social classes were strengthened rather than diminished during the carnival celebrations, as there was a whole range of social codes and norms hidden in the seemingly equal carnival audience. J.H. Johnson, *Venice Incognito: Masks in the Serene Republic* (Berkeley, Los Angeles and London, 2011), 203–14.

The bookkeeping of the carnival Redoute balls reveals that in the late eighteenth century the carnival balls were attended annually by more than 10,000 people.³⁹ Thus, it is no surprise that some were also people from the bourgeois class. A good account of the social classes that took part in the masked balls organized in the hall can be found in Joachim Perinet's description of masked balls celebrated during the carnival time of 1788. Perinet, a Viennese actor and writer, portrayed, for example, an artist dressed as King Midas, an official wearing the clothes of a tinsmith and a doctor dressed up as a grave digger. There was also a member of the bourgeoisie who dressed as a beggar, and a police officer who wore a Venetian mantel.⁴⁰ Nevertheless, people who considered themselves as belonging to better society were not in favour of common people attending balls. Mozart, for example, who was an enthusiastic dancer,⁴¹ complained that tickets for the balls were sold to everyone on the streets, even barbers and parlour maids.⁴² Schulz reported that during the Viennese carnivals in 1795 the nobility did not celebrate; they only watched while the middle and bourgeois classes enjoyed themselves.⁴³ This was also noticed by a certain Bavarian traveller, who visited Vienna in the early nineteenth century. According to his travel account, the brilliance and richness of both the Viennese nobility and bourgeoisie was visible in the Redoute Hall, but, with the exception of a few nobles, it was mostly the latter who danced. The court did not dance at all.⁴⁴

³⁹ Berechnung über Empfang und Ausgabe. Bey den Fasching 1780 hindurch in den Kaisz: Königs: am Redouten Säälen; Berechnung über Empfang und Ausgabe bey den – den Fasching 1781. Hindurch in den Kais: Königs. Redouten Säälen abgehaltenen 10. Maskirten Bällen; Berechnung über Empfang, und Ausgabe bey den von 11sten November 1781. Bis Ende Fasching 1782. In den Kais: Königs: Redouten Säälen abgehaltenen 15 maskirten Bällen; Berechnung über Empfang, und Ausgabe. Bey den-den Fasching 1784. hindurch in den Kaisz: Königs: am Redouten Säälen. Abgehaltenen 12. maskirten Bällen; Berechnung über Empfang, und Ausgabe. Bey den-den Fasching 1785. hindurch in den K: K: Redouten Säälen abgehaltenen 13. maskirten Bällen; Berechnung über Empfang und Ausgab. Bei den – den Fasching 1786. Hindurch in den Kais: Königs: Redouten Säälen abgehaltenen 14 maskirten und 5 Apartment-mässigen Bällen; Berechnung über Empfang und Ausgab. Bei den – den Fasching 1787. Hindurch in den Kais: Königs: Redouten Säälen abgehaltenen 11 maskirten Bällen; Berechnung über Empfang und Ausgab. Bei den – den Fasching 1789. Hindurch in den K: K: Redouten Säälen abgehaltenen 12 maskirten Bällen; Berechnung über Empfang und Ausgab. Bei den – den Fasching 1792. Hindurch in den K: K: Redouten Säälen abgehaltenen 12 maskirten Bällen; Berechnung über Empfang und Ausgab. Bei den – den Fasching 1794 in den Kais: Königs: Redouten Säälen abgehaltenen Sechzehn maskirten Bällen; Berechnung über Empfang und Ausgab. Bei den – den Fasching 1798. Hindurch in den K: K: Redouten Säälen abgehaltenen 14 maskirten Bällen; Berechnung über Empfang und Ausgabe. Bei den – den Fasching 1799 in den K:K: Redouten Säälen abgehaltenen 12. Maskirten Bällen. Haus-, Hof- und Staatsarchiv. AT-OeStA/HHStA HA GldHTh SR 37–48b.

⁴⁰ J. Perinet, *Annehmlichkeiten in Wien* (Vienna, 1788), 34–6.

⁴¹ According to Michael Kelly, Mozart's wife had told him that Mozart was an enthusiast in dancing, and often said that his taste lay in that art, rather than in music. M. Kelly, *Reminiscences of Michael Kelly* (London, 1826), 223.

⁴² Witzmann, *Ländler in Wien*, 4.

⁴³ Schulz, *Reise eines Liefländers*, 218.

⁴⁴ Anon., *Bemerkungen oder Briefe über Wien eines jungen Bayern auf einer Reise durch Deutschland an eine Dame von Stande* (Leipzig, 1804), 118–19.

Just as the Viennese elite preferred not to dance with the lower classes at the carnival Redoute, nor were they pleased when the bourgeoisie started visiting another inner-city ballroom, Mehlgrube, in the 1780s. Until the 1770s, the Mehlgrube, a luxurious and massive baroque building situated in the inner city at the Neue Markt No. 5, once known as a dance place for the nobility, became one of the first bourgeois public dance halls in Vienna.⁴⁵ Upon recognition of the fact that the bourgeoisie dominated the place, the nobility no longer went there. Characteristically, Prince Johann Josef Khevenhüller-Metsch complained in his diary during the carnival time of 1775 that noble men could no longer dance in Mehlgrube, since it had become more of an inn than a proper dance hall after people from the 'under class' had started to dance there.⁴⁶ This was also noticed by Perinet, who in 1788 grumbled that 'Mehlgrube used to be one of the best halls in Vienna, but unfortunately it is no longer a pleasant place.'⁴⁷ According to *Eipeldauer Briefe*, a monthly Viennese journal which commented on events in Vienna, in 1800 Mehlgrube was filled with bourgeois women.⁴⁸ In 1801, Pichler remarked that Mehlgrube was for the lower and poorer orders, as businessmen and craftsmen danced there. Servants also went to these balls in 1801, but wearing costumes that hid their social status.⁴⁹

Once the lower classes became the dominant group visiting the Redoute Hall and the Mehlgrube, the Viennese elite went dancing to *Traiteurs Jahn*, a restaurant in the Himmelpfortgasse run by Ignaz Jahn.⁵⁰ Jahn had bought the building on Himmelpfortgasse in 1785, and three years later he opened the restaurant to the public. Balls and private concerts were held there only for selected society until 1807, when Ignaz's son Franz announced that the restaurant would be open to the general public.⁵¹ In 1801, Pichler had described the hall as very elegant, very finely furnished and lit with cut-glass chandeliers.⁵² According to Pichler, the entrance fee for *Traiteurs Jahn* was 3–4 Gulden,⁵³ thus far too expensive for the lower classes, such as workers with their annual incomes of 100 Gulden, let alone servants who earned only 20 Gulden per year.⁵⁴ The dance hall was already closed in 1809, after which Jahn organized balls in his restaurant in Augarten which became well known during the Congress of Vienna.⁵⁵

⁴⁵ S. Leitner, 'Die Mehlgrube am Neuen Markt in Wien', unpublished, Geistes- und Kulturwissenschaftlichen Fakultät der Universität Wien, 2001, 3, 26.

⁴⁶ J.J. Khevenhüller-Metsch, *Theater, Feste und Feiern zur Zeit Maria Theresias 1742–1776. Nach den tagebucheintragungen des Fürsten Johann Josef Khevenhüller-Metsch*, ed. Elisabeth Grossegger (Vienna, 1987), 291.

⁴⁷ Perinet, *Annehmlichkeiten in Wien*, 37.

⁴⁸ J. Richter, 'Die Eipeldauer Briefe 1785–1797', in *Josef Richter: I Auswahl herausgegeben, eingeleitet und mit Anmerkungen versehen* (Munich, 1918; orig. publ., 1800), 42–3.

⁴⁹ Pichler, *Neuestes Sittengemälde von Wien*, 101–4.

⁵⁰ Witzmann, *Ländler in Wien*, 10.

⁵¹ Morrow, *Concert Life in Haydn's Vienna*, 101–2.

⁵² Pichler, *Neuestes Sittengemälde von Wien*, 96.

⁵³ *Ibid.*

⁵⁴ Morrow, *Concert Life in Haydn's Vienna*, 112.

⁵⁵ Pemmer, *Alt-Wiener Gast- und Vergnügungsstätten*, 153.

Judging by the cost of the entrance tickets, Klubb and Ottos Kasino in the inner city, probably both owned by Philipp Otto, would seem to have been aimed at the lower bourgeoisie and artisans. In 1791, Philipp Otto advertised his ballroom Klubb in *Wiener Zeitung* by stating that from 6 January public balls would be organized on Sundays and holidays in Klubb in Spiegelgasse No. 1368. Tickets for men cost 40 Kreuzer, whereas for women, only 20 Kreuzer. People wearing servants' livery were not welcomed.⁵⁶ In 1797, subscription for 21 balls in Ottos Kasino was one Ducat for men and half for women. Tickets for single events cost 40 Kreuzer for men and 20 for women, respectively. Otto's enterprise would appear to have been popular, since it was still open after the Congress.

Together with the ballrooms situated in the city centre, there were dozens of ballrooms in suburban Vienna. Most of the ballrooms were situated in Leopoldstadt and Wieden. In addition, there were many dance venues on Landstrasse. Perinet tells us that suburban dance halls were visited by all kinds of suburban people, with different halls attracting different people: 'There are now, as known, Mondschein hall for sentimentalists, das Schaaf for housemaids and fools, den schwarzen Bok or Schneider in der Trauer for young jumpers.'⁵⁷

Suburban dance venues such as Joseph Trapp's ballroom, Mondschein and Bey 2 grünen Lampeln were aimed at the suburban bourgeoisie. According to an announcement in *Wiener Zeitung* in 1785, only respectable persons were invited to Joseph Trapp's private ball in Wienerisch-Neustadt.⁵⁸ Bey 2 grünen Lampeln, opened on Mariahilferstrasse No. 251 in 1783, seems to have been another bourgeois ballroom. On 28 December, 1783, an advertisement was placed in *Das Wienerblättchen* for a new dance hall Bey 2 grünen Lampeln, open to all but without work uniform: 'On the 23rd of this month a newly built dance hall will be opened in the inn "Bey 2 grünen Lampeln" in Mariahilferstrasse No. 251, where everyone (livery, and also a cap of maidservant or so called bohemian cap, corsets undressed) can enjoy and amuse themselves with good music.'⁵⁹ Good food and wine were also served there at 'a good price'. As was announced in another advertisement in 1785, this 'good price' was 2 Florins,⁶⁰ suggesting that the place was, in fact, intended for the wealthy bourgeoisie rather than artisans or workers.

⁵⁶ *Wiener Zeitung*, 1 Jan. 1791, 13.

⁵⁷ 'Da giebt es nun, wie bekannt, einen Mondschein-Saal für die Empfindler, Das Schaaf für Stubenmädchen und Schaafköpfe, den schwarzen Bok oder Schneider in der Trauer für junge Springer', Perinet, *Annehmlichkeiten in Wien*, 36–7.

⁵⁸ *Wiener Zeitung*, 5 Jan. 1785, 41.

⁵⁹ *Das Wienerblättchen*, 17 Mar. 1783, 103. 'Den 23ten dieses Monats November wird in dem Gasthaus bey 2 grünen Lampeln an der Mariahilferstasse Nro. 251. ein ganz neu erbauter Tanzsaal eröffnet werden, in welchem Jedermann (livree, dann Stubenmädchen- oder sogenannte böhmische hauben, und Corseten ausgenommen) bey einer wohl besetzten Musick sich angenehm wird unterhalten können.'

⁶⁰ *Wiener Zeitung*, 5 Jan. 1785, 41.

Mondschein, which first opened in 1772, was also one of the best suburban ballrooms in the sense that the rich bourgeoisie danced there at the beginning of the 1780s. In 1781, Friedrich Nicolai, German writer and bookseller, praised this suburban ballroom by describing how the rich young bourgeoisie, merchants and lower civil servants danced waltzes there with their wives, daughters and sisters.⁶¹ However, 25 years later, in 1808, the Mondschein no longer had a good reputation. It was reported that the music and lighting were low grade as were the guests – perhaps even more so.⁶²

There were also cheaper ballrooms for suburban craftsmen and servants, such as Grüne Tor, Traiteur zum Strochen and Goldenen Einhorn. According to an announcement from the year 1783, the entrance was free for Grüne Tor.⁶³ Goldenen Einhorn, for its part, was advertised as a cheap dance place to which all, except people dressed in servants' livery, were welcome.⁶⁴ The same welcome was given to Traiteur zum Strochen in Kohlmarkt, where everybody was invited to enjoy good music with the 'usual exceptions'.⁶⁵ These 'usual exceptions' meant, of course, servants. Nevertheless, as noticed by Pichler in 1801, servants were in practice allowed to dance in the public ballrooms provided they were not wearing their livery.⁶⁶

Although the dance hall business was less strictly regulated in late eighteenth-century Vienna, and dance halls for every social strata were founded in the city, dance culture, nevertheless, was not democratic. Dance halls were divided by regulations – only noble persons were allowed to attend certain dance halls – and by entrance fee. For these reasons, a rift remained between the elite and lower classes in Viennese dancing culture. While the elite danced in their own ballrooms situated in the inner city, the lower classes danced mainly in cheaper suburban dance venues. The situation was about to change, however, as many inner-city dance venues lost their popularity among the Viennese aristocracy at the turn of the century. This was, on the one hand, because the lower bourgeoisie, which had grown rapidly in size due to the early stages of industrialization, started visiting some of the dance places of the elite, who, in turn, abandoned these kinds of dance halls as being inappropriate for their social status. On the other hand, at the beginning of the nineteenth century many luxurious dance venues attracting the Viennese nobility were founded in suburban Vienna. Developments of these kinds certainly caused problems for inner-city dance venues, such as Traiteurs Jahn and Mehlgrube, which were now forced to become second-class dance venues or to close.

⁶¹ Fink, 'Tanzstätten und Tanzveranstaltungen und Bälle', 28.

⁶² Anon., *Reise der Göttinn der Tanzkunst in den Apollo-Saal und zu den übrigen Faschingslustbarkeiten in Wien* (Vienna, 1808), 89.

⁶³ Pemmer, *Alt-Wiener Gast- und Vergnügungsstätten*, 162.

⁶⁴ *Wiener Zeitung*, 27 Dec. 1783.

⁶⁵ *Das Wienerblättchen*, 28 Dec. 1783, 83–4.

⁶⁶ Pichler, *Neuestes Sittengemälde von Wien*, 101–4.

Early nineteenth century: new suburban playgrounds

At the beginning of the nineteenth century, the popularity of dancing continued unabated in Vienna. On 15 February 1809, an astonished Johann Friedrich Reichardt commented on the Viennese carnival, stating that the love of dancing in Vienna had now intensified to the point of becoming dance mania, as both young and old Viennese could be seen dancing almost daily in public and private balls.⁶⁷ Similarly, a journalist of *Paris und London* reported in January 1812 that Viennese people were no longer mad only about theatres; now there was also dance mania in the city.⁶⁸ In response to the 'dance obsession', many new ballrooms were founded in suburban Vienna during the first decade of the nineteenth century.

It is not a coincidence that new ballrooms emerged in the early nineteenth century. Despite the fact that Vienna was occupied twice during the period and the economy started to recover only after the war, the city grew as its industry grew, creating not only a large group of workers but also a rich and powerful bourgeois class. As pointed out by H.E. Jacob, one of the first Strauss biographers, in the early nineteenth century the beginning of industrialization in Vienna created a rich bourgeois class, which demanded more and better dance halls. The citizens had grown wealthier and needed new playgrounds for their new sense of well-being.⁶⁹ However, not only the bourgeoisie danced in the new ballrooms but also the nobles, who remained rich and powerful in the city.

Although the new ballrooms were expensive, the Viennese bourgeoisie was able to dance there. According to Pezzl, the new suburban ballrooms were visited frequently by the bourgeois class during the first two decades of the century.⁷⁰ A traveller who visited Vienna in 1813 stated that Apollo Hall and Zum Römischen Kaiser, both founded in 1808, were particularly popular dance halls among the bourgeoisie.⁷¹ In the advertisement for Zum Römischen Kaiser of the year 1809, the ballroom was touted by saying that it had been very popular during the years of 1808 and 1809.⁷² Moreover, in 1816, *Wiener Mode-Zeitung* reported that during carnival time the dance hall was so full that people had to dance in the dining room and in the passage.⁷³ The Apollo Hall, however, was quickly catching up and would soon become the most popular dance hall in the city.

The Apollo Hall was opened in 1808. At the opening in January there were more than 4,000 visitors, although the entrance fee was 25 Gulden.

⁶⁷ J.F. Reichardt, *Vertraute Briefe, geschrieben auf einer Reise nach Wien und den Österreichischen Staaten zu Ende des Jahres 1808 und zu Anfang 1809*, ed. Gustav Gugitz (Munich, 1915), 324–5.

⁶⁸ *London und Paris*, 1812, 59–74.

⁶⁹ Jacob, *Johann Strauss*, 33–5.

⁷⁰ J. Pezzl, *Neueste Beschreibung von Wien, mit vorzüglicher Rücksicht auf alle Merkwürdigkeiten dieser großen Kaiserstadt* (Vienna and Trieste, 1817), 207.

⁷¹ J. Bramsen, *Letters of a Prussian Traveller* (London, 1818), 86–7.

⁷² *Wiener Zeitung*, 23 Dec. 1809, 3656.

⁷³ *Wiener Mode-Zeitung*, 8 Feb. 1816, 48.

According to the announcement placed in the *Wiener Zeitung* on 16 January 1808, the Apollo Hall, which had been opened on 10 January for selected people, was now open to everyone. The cover charge for everybody was five Gulden. People wearing inappropriate clothes were not welcomed, nor were people carrying arms or in servants' livery.⁷⁴ This announcement was signed by Sigmund Wolffsohn, the owner of the Apollo Hall. Probably born in London, he had moved to Vienna, where he made a fortune as a doctor. In order to invest his money in a profit-making business, Wolffsohn opened a dance hall.⁷⁵ The Apollo Hall was a luxurious dance hall, with many rooms and a high-grade restaurant. There were five rooms for dancing, the biggest hall of which was bigger than the *Große Saal* in the Redoute Hall.⁷⁶ The luxurious decorations of the Apollo Hall were noticed by many visitors.⁷⁷ 'Everything is so beautiful, so new, that taste, art and brilliance are fighting for supremacy', enthused Joseph Carl Rosenbaum in his diary after visiting the new Apollo Hall.⁷⁸

In Rosenbaum's opinion, however, the Apollo Hall was a megalomaniac project. Since the expenses of the ballroom were enormous and the ballroom was situated in suburban Vienna, he did not believe that it could make a profit.⁷⁹ It is not known how high the expenses of the Apollo Hall really were during its early years. A document relating to the costs of a ball organized there in 1824, preserved in the Wiener Stadt- und Landesbibliothek, reveals that the orchestra and the lighting were the biggest expenses, at 350 and 300 Florins respectively. In addition, a considerable amount of money went into the salaries of cleaners and guardians.⁸⁰ Despite these costs, Wolffsohn believed firmly in the ballroom business. By advertising and arranging coach rides from central Vienna to his ballroom, he believed – wrongly, unfortunately – that his huge investment could make a profit. He not only advertised Apollo Hall in newspapers, but also published a book *Bekanntmachung der Ballordnung am Apollo-Saale auf der Mariahilferstraße in der Zieglergasse Nro. 113* in which he announced that *Fiakers*, horse cabs, could pick people up from the city centre and also from the suburbs, if one wanted to visit the Apollo Hall.⁸¹

⁷⁴ *Wiener Zeitung*, 16 Jan. 1808, 84.

⁷⁵ Jacob, *Johann Strauss*, 39–44.

⁷⁶ V. Stöger, *Der Apollo-Saal* (Vienna, 1897), 5–9.

⁷⁷ For example *Journal des Luxus und der Moden März*, 1808, 201–2; anon., *Reise der Göttinn der Tanzkunst in den Apollo-Saal und zu den übrigen Faschingslustbarkeiten in Wien*; 'Der Apollo-Saal', *Das Sonntagsblatt*, No. 55, 17 Jan. 1808.

⁷⁸ 'Alles ist so schön, so neu, daß Geschmack, Kunst und Pracht um den Vorzug streiten.' J.C. Rosenbaum, *Die Tagebücher von Joseph Carl Rosenbaum*, ed. Else Radant (Vienna, London, Zurich, Mainz and Milan, 1968), 142.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, 142.

⁸⁰ 'Ausweis der Ausgaben bey Abhaltung eines Ball's im Apollo-Saal', Wiener Stadt- und Landesbibliothek.

⁸¹ Sigmund Wolffsohn, *Bekanntmachung der Ballordnung am Apollo-Saale auf der Mariahilferstraße in der Zieglergasse Nro. 113* (Vienna, 1808), 4.

For visitors, too, the Apollo Hall was an expensive venue. Johann Friedrich Reichardt, a German composer and writer who happened to be in Vienna at the time, estimated that visiting the ballroom would cost approximately 20 or 25 Gulden. In addition to the entrance ticket valued at five Gulden, a lot of money went on horse cab and bar services. Nevertheless, despite the high expenses, at the opening of the hall, there were not only noble visitors but members of the bourgeoisie as well, as Reichardt noticed to his surprise. He was even more amazed to see not only bourgeoisie but what he assumed to be peasants, too, dancing in the Apollo Hall the following Sunday. He subsequently learned, however, that this was due to the fact that the people who had helped to build the dance hall were rewarded with free tickets.⁸²

Clearly, however, the social distinctions did not disappear, and social space remained divided. Characteristically, there were ballrooms in early nineteenth-century Vienna which were clearly dance places for the bourgeoisie. As already discussed, in the early nineteenth century only lower bourgeoisie were seen dancing in Mehlgrube.⁸³ The rich industrial bourgeoisie, for their part, amused themselves in Sperl, which was opened in Leopoldstadt on 29 September 1807. In the following year, the ballroom was praised in a book called *Reise der Göttinn der Tanzkunst in den Apollo-Saal und zu den übrigen Faschingslustbarkeiten in Wien*, a kind of a contemporary review of the Viennese dance halls. According to its author, music and visitors in Sperl were both high grade, but the nobility did not dance there.⁸⁴ This is reflected in the cheap entrance fee of the ballroom. Although Scherzer, the director of the hall, announced in 1809 that Sperl was open to nobility and respectable persons, its entrance fee, only 48 Kreuzer for men and 24 Kreuzer for women, attracted the Viennese bourgeoisie rather than the nobility.⁸⁵ Even with the great inflation of 1811, when the entrance price rose to three Florins for men and two for women, Sperl was advertised as an affordable dance hall.⁸⁶

Furthermore, by the end of the second decade of the century, the nobility had lost their interest in suburban ballrooms. Now they escaped either into the Redoute Hall or private balls, which were becoming increasingly popular. Characteristically, in 1816, *Wiener Mode-Zeitung* reported that because neither the court nor the nobility were in the city, the carnival Redoute was not attended by many.⁸⁷ Moreover, a month later the same fashion magazine stated that private balls arranged in private homes had

⁸² Reichardt, *Vertraute Briefe, geschrieben auf einer Reise nach Wien und den Österreichischen Staaten zu Ende des Jahres 1808 und zu Anfang 1809*, 252.

⁸³ Anon., *Reise der Göttinn der Tanzkunst in den Apollo-Saal und zu den übrigen Faschingslustbarkeiten in Wien*, 89.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, 88–9.

⁸⁵ *Wiener Zeitung*, 4 Jan. 1809, 22–3.

⁸⁶ *Wiener Zeitung*, 11 Jan. 1812, 42.

⁸⁷ *Wiener Mode-Zeitung*, 1 Feb. 1816, 40.

become increasingly popular in the city,⁸⁸ so popular, in fact, that in 1818 the journalist of the magazine could observe that the Viennese elite had almost entirely abandoned public venues and escaped into the balls of closed society, 'which this time had been numerous as ever'.⁸⁹ Thus, in a similar way to early nineteenth-century London, private balls became increasingly popular among the Viennese elite during the second decade of the century.

The emergence of salon culture of this kind has been seen as the aristocracy's response to strengthening bourgeois culture. While Steven Kale has remarked that the salon was a historically specific expression of the aristocracy's determination to regulate and control the transition from a hereditary to an open elite,⁹⁰ Alice Hanson, for her part, has stated that in Vienna aristocratic salons became refuges, aloof from the society dominated by the middle class.⁹¹ But in the first place it was, of course, commerce related to music publishing and piano production that enabled private music culture to develop in Biedermeier Vienna.⁹² Thus, again, the supply side of the consumption seems to play a role in determining distinctions between social classes, as Bourdieu has pointed out.

In addition, the decline of the popularity of the public ballrooms can be explained by economic factors. The Apollo Hall, the biggest public dance hall in the whole of Europe, was greatly affected by the depression of 1811. Sigmund Wolffsohn went bankrupt and was forced to sell the contents of his ballroom in 1812. Partly thanks to the profitable time of the Congress of Vienna, Wolffsohn's megalomaniac enterprise survived until 1818, after which it was sold to a businessman called Holfmayer. However, the ballroom business did not recover before the end of the decade, when, on 26 December 1819, Holfmayer reopened the Apollo Hall.⁹³ Moreover, Johann Georg Scherzer, the owner of the Sperl Hall, could now invest in his enterprise. In 1819, the new Sperl was advertised in a leaflet, according to which not only the decorations of the dance hall had been renewed but the hall had been enlarged as well.⁹⁴ Sperl remained a popular dance venue until the late nineteenth century, not least because both Johann Strauss the elder and Johann Strauss the younger conducted there. Apollo Hall, for its

⁸⁸ *Wiener Mode-Zeitung*, 7 Mar. 1816, 87.

⁸⁹ *Wiener Mode-Zeitung und Zeitschrift für Kunst, schöne Literatur und Theater*, 7 Feb. 1818, 135–6.

⁹⁰ See for example, S.D. Kale, *French Salons: High Society and Political Sociability from the Old Regime to the Revolution of 1848* (Baltimore, 2004), 8–9.

⁹¹ Hanson, *Musical Life in Biedermeier Vienna*, 181–2.

⁹² See for example W. Litschauer and W. Deutsch, *Schubert und das Tanzvergnügen* (Vienna, 1997), 8–9.

⁹³ Stöger, *Der Apollo-Saal*, 5–15.

⁹⁴ 'Einladung zu einem Gesellschafts-Balle in der Leopoldstad beym Sperl. Donnerstag den 28. Jänner 1819', *Wiener Stadt- und Landesbibliothek*.

part, lost its popularity and was finally converted into a candle factory in 1839.⁹⁵

Conclusion: Social distinctions in urban dance hall culture

In Vienna, public dance hall culture emerged for the first time in the late eighteenth century. As many restrictions on dance hall business were abolished during the period, many innkeepers hurried to open ballrooms for the growing public. Consequently, during the thirty-year period (1780–1810), the number of Viennese public dance venues more than tripled, from 15 to 50. Although this formed the basis of Vienna's later reputation as a carefree city of fiddlers and waltz, in social terms, however, early dance hall culture in Vienna was very much regulated and controlled. Despite the fact that all social classes could enjoy dancing in the Viennese public ballrooms for the first time, dance culture was anything but democratic. At the turn of the century, Vienna was a major city with a heterogeneous population, and this diversity of social classes was reflected in the dance hall culture.

The Viennese elite, the nobility and the higher bourgeoisie, was not in favour of dancing with the lower bourgeoisie. In the late eighteenth century, when the first public dance halls opened, the elite danced in the inner-city ballrooms, such as the Mehlgrube and Traiteurs Jahn. However, as soon as the lower bourgeoisie found their way to these dance venues, the elite abandoned them. Moreover, despite the fact that occasionally both the elite and the lower classes attended the same carnival balls, the elite did not, in fact, celebrate with the lower classes. Thus, even in shared social spaces the elite sought to remain separate from the lower classes.

While the nobility and bourgeoisie were dancing in the inner-city ballrooms, the craftsmen, workers and servants danced in cheaper suburban dance venues. However, in the early nineteenth century the situation was about to change. On the one hand, this was because some of the inner-city ballrooms were converted to low-grade dance halls that attracted the lower classes. On the other, this was because at the beginning of the nineteenth century new ballrooms aimed at the rich elite were founded in suburban Vienna. Thus, to some extent the whole situation turned upside-down, as the elite went to celebrate in the suburbs and the lower classes in the inner city.

The new suburban ballrooms were aimed at both the bourgeoisie and the nobility, but, nevertheless, distinctions still occurred. As the Apollo Hall was very expensive, it was visited mainly by the richest bourgeoisie and nobility. The Sperl, for its part, was attended only by the bourgeoisie. Although the new and luxurious ballrooms were open to everyone, in

⁹⁵ N. Linke, *Johann Strauß* (Hamburg, 2003), 29–31, 54–6; Hanson, *Musical Life in Biedermeier Vienna*, 167.

reality the most luxurious of them were not attended by the lower classes, because they were so expensive. In other words, ticket prices also produced a class hierarchy in the Viennese ballrooms in the early nineteenth century. Nevertheless, the luxurious suburban ballrooms lost their glamour by the end of the second decade of the century, after which private dancing parties, in turn, became fashionable among the Viennese elite.

This seems to fit rather well with Bourdieu's theory, which argues that the consumption of culture is one of the most important ways through which social differences between social classes is expressed and that the distinction recognized in all dominant classes takes different forms depending on the state of the production of cultural goods, i.e. dance halls in this context. As we have seen, the Viennese elite adapted quickly the new dancing spaces offered by the dance hall industry. In this way, the Viennese aristocracy was able to distinguish themselves from the bourgeoisie which was rapidly catching up. Therefore, it seems as if the elite was playing cat and mouse with the lower classes in turn-of-the-century Vienna: when the lower classes found their way to the ballrooms of the elite in the late eighteenth century, the latter no longer went dancing there, and correspondingly, when the bourgeois dance halls matched those of the nobility in the early nineteenth century, the nobility began to favour private dancing parties.

But since social distinctions can also be manifested in shared social space, as was the case in the Viennese carnival balls for instance, one needs to ask why the Viennese nobility became increasingly reluctant to attend the same dance halls with the bourgeoisie. As this resembled the situation in London, comparison may help to understand better the case of Vienna. It has been pointed out that private assembly balls became increasingly popular among the London aristocracy in the early nineteenth century, because now the aristocracy wanted to distance and protect themselves from the enriched middle ranks. In other words, public balls were not considered as suitable places for socializing and arranging marriages between noble families, since high entrance fees could no longer prevent the middle class from attending these balls. This might have been the case in socially rigid Vienna, too, where, even with the growing importance of the bourgeoisie, the nobility remained the dominant social class until the end of the century. Thus, even if early nineteenth-century Vienna was a carefree city of waltz, choosing a dancing partner was anything but a slight issue in the city at the time.